SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Sir, the Minister has said that we have a shortage of coal and the Ministry is trying to increase the production of coal by various methods. I would like to know from the Minister whether he is aware of the fact that in Jharia, a large part of the coal is being burnt underground. The fire has been going on for the last fifty, sixty years. The Minister also referred to the Central Coal Fields Limited, which according to him, are the oldest mines. There also, a large part of the coal mines is burning. I would like to know whether any steps are being taken by the Government to see that the fire is extinguished and the coking coal can be produced in a large quantity in the CCL because a large number of coal reserves are still there. What is being done to raise the coal in these areas?

SHRI DILIP RAY: Sir, I did not say that there is shortage of coal. I said that we are trying to meet the demand, and as per the demand, we are raising the coal. So far as the question of fire in Jharia and the CCL is concerned, I would like to inform the House that it is not only fifty, sixty years old but the fire in Jharia and the CCL is more than ninety years old. We have already taken certain steps to control it. We have got a foreign expert to do a study on it. We have already started spending money on this to see to it that this fire is controlled.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Sir, unfortunately, the same answer has been given by the Minister in the past also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question, No. 363.

Withdrawal of Defence PSUs from Disinvestment Commission

†*363. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Four defence PSUs withdrawn from Disinvestment Commission" appearing in the Hindu, dated the 12th November, 1997; and

(b) if so, the reasons for which the PSUs are being referred to Disinvestment Commission without consulting the concerned administrative Ministries, management and workers;

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At the time of referring PSEs to the Disinvestment Commission, it is not considered necessary to consult administrative Ministries as the Commission, after examination, may not recommend disinvestment in a particular PSE. At the time of processing the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission for acceptance, the administrative Ministry and Management of the PSE concerned are duly consulted and their views considered.

Disinvestment by PSUs

†*376. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of PSUs that have been identified for disinvestment by the Disinvestment Commission;

(b) whether Government have in principle agreed on the recommendations of Disinvestment Commission;

(c) whether the Disinvestment Commission has the right to monitor the disinvestment or it is only a recommending body; and

(d) whether Government will consider giving statutory power to the Commission to monitor disinvestment?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) 29 Public Sector Enterprises have been identified for disinvestment so far by the Disinvestment Commission.

(b) The recommendations are examined by the Government for

† Starred Questions Number 363 and 376 were taken together.

appropriate decision and implementation in a phased manner, which is a continuous process.

(c) and (d) Disinvestment Commission is an Advisory body. There is no proposal at present to grant statutory powers to the Disinvestment Commission to monitor disinvestment.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, it is conspicuous that a number of PSUs which produce the sensitive defence materials like the BHEL were referred for disinvestment without consulting the Administrative Ministry. However, afterwards, those industries were withdrawn from the Disinvestment Commission.

I would like to know-this is part (a) of my question—whether the Ministry has enquired into the matter and has found out the officers who are responsible for referring the Defence Units for disinvestment; if so, what action has been taken thereon. Part (b) of my question is whether the hon. Minister will assure the House that the industries which have already been withdrawn from the Disinvestment Commission will not be referred again for disinvestment.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, four industries have already been withdrawn. Therefore, the question of giving any further assurance doesn't arise. They have already been withdrawn. Originally, it was the Disinvestment Commission itself which said that core industries need not be taken up, i.e. which are concerned with the security of the country, and that is why, they themselves had referred them back, and ultimately it was the adminsitrative Ministry which agreed that these four and three more from the Coal Ministry were to be withdrawn. Seven undertakings were withdrawn.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, the hon. Minister is not giving the assurance concretely. Those who were taken back...*(Interruption)*...

†Starred Questions Number 363 and 376 were taken together.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: They have already been withdrawn.

SHRI JIBON ROY: I know they were withdrawn, but 'those will not be referred for disinvestment again'—that assurance has not come from you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyway, there is no question of Government assurance. Second supplementary.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, my second supplementary is this. The Disinvestment Commission was constituted to review the disinvestment position. Technically, it is a technical Commission. It has made some recommendations, but finally, the decision has to be taken politically, at an appropriate political level. We realise that. Now, the nation or the people of the country is the owner of the entire public sector assets amounting to around thirty lakh crores, if you take the market value. What is the appropriate level? I think, the President is the holder of all equities because....*(Interruption)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question?

SHRI JIBON ROY: My question is, when the Government is thinking in terms of disposing of 50 per cent of the equities of the PSUs, whether it will come before the House before taking a political decision on it, as is declared.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, I can tell the hon. Member the present practices. About the future, everything is in the realm of future. How can I say what is going to happen later! You see, there are two processes. One is the actual process of disinvestment. The other is how PSUs are referred to the Disinvestment Commission. I can give you the details of both the processes, if you like.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now I am calling Mr. Rahman Khan. Because there is a question on the same subject, we are taking up both the questions together.

SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Disinvestment Commission has recommended 29 PSUs for disinvestment; if so, how many of them have been accepted by the Government; whether there will be any monitoring agency for disinvestment; whether the Ministry itself is the monitoring agency now, and whether the Disinvestment Commission will be given power to monitor that disinvestment is properly carried out.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, the disinvestment in four PSUs has been approved. That is number one. Number two, originally when the Disinvestment Commission was created, the monitoring responsibility was supposed to be with the Disinvestment Commission, but the Government has withdrawn the monitoring power from them. Now, monitoring is done by the Core Group of Secretaries.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, my supplementary is related to Question No. 363. I don't know how far the Minister will be able to answer my question because it is more concerned with the Defence Ministry. But my question is very simple.

The defence production is not a commercial production in this country. So, the Government cannot take the defence production on the basis of profit and loss account. We are now a salesman of arms abroad. There are certain statements by the Defence Minister that we are going to privatise some of the defence production units. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is going to deviate from the policy. Is the defence production going to be a comercial production? Is it going to world market? Or, is it only for meeting the needs of the country? Which is the policy that you are going to adopt? Are you going to privatise or not? I am against privatisation.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Primarily, by and large, it has been decided not to bring the PSUs concerned with the strategic production into the bracket of disinvestment. We don't do it. It has been done in two cases. Besides that, nothing else has been done. There is no such intention at the moment.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, from time to time one reads the statement of the Chairman of the Disinvestment Commission expressing his dissatisfaction with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Commission. Will the hon. Minister tell us if he has any plans to improve the public relations of the Government with the Disinvestment Commission?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, I am aware of the dissatisfaction of the Chairman of the Disinvestment Commission. The matter is under consideration.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, the Government has referred a large number of cases, I think, 50 or so, to the Disinvestment Commission. How many of them were considered by the Commission? How many of them were recommended for disinvestment? What is the action taken with regard to the recommendations?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Out of the 50 cases originally referred to the Disinvestment Commission, as I have already stated, seven were taken back. They have made recommendations in 41 cases. Out of that, four have been accepted and the rest of them are still under consideration.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, the two questions have been clubbed. One is regarding the Defence and the other is regarding non-defence. This is a policy that the Government has formulated and this is a recommendation of the Disinvestment Commission that the Government will have to implement. Therefore, a question arises. While

referring disinvestment of a particular unit to the Disinvestment Commission, does the Government take into consideration the difference between defence and non-defence, strategic and non-strategic? Does it take this into consideration? Or, does it matter little? Is it all done on the whim? This is part (a) of my question. Part (b) of my question is this. While referring disinvestment of a particular unit, that is, the public sector undertaking, to the Disinvestment Commission, does the Government take into consideration that the ownership shall pass on to the private sector? In some cases it is going to be 75 per cent. If the ownership passes on to the private sector, to the private shareholders, what is the impact that it is going to have on the economy in general and on the functioning of that unit in particular? Or, is it being done just to mop up funds to bridge the gap in the Budget?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, Basically he has put a question whether we are going to do this or that. The answer to both the questions is yes. With regard to the other part of the question, no disinvestment is done in the strategic sector. That is number one. I have already stated that. The disinvestment is done to provide market discipline, to improve the performance of public sector enterprises, to raise, as the hon. Member has said, resources, to encourage wider public participation and to promote accountability.

सरकारी क्षेत्र के अंतर्गत कोयला उत्पादक औद्योगिक एकक

*364. **श्री बरजिन्दर सिंह:**
श्री बलवन्त सिंह रामूवालिया: †

क्या कोयला मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकारी क्षेत्र के बहुत से कोयला उत्पादक औद्योगिक एकक गत कई वर्षों से निरंतर घाटे में चल रहे हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो ये एकक कौन-कौन से हैं और मार्च, 1998 तक इन्हें कुल कितना नुकसान हुआ; और

(ग) मार्च, 1998 तक इन एककों में कुल कितना पूंजी-निवेश हुआ?

कोयला मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री दिलिप राय): (क) और (ख) कोल इंडिया लि० (को० इं० लि०) एक धारक कंपनी है, जो भारत सरकार के प्रशासनिक नियंत्रण के अंतर्गत एक कोयला उत्पादक सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र का उपक्रम है। ईस्टर्न कोलफील्ड्स लि० (ई० को० लि०), भारत कोकिंग कोल लि० (भा० को० को० लि०), कोल इंडिया लि० की सहायक कंपनियां और नार्थ ईस्टर्न कोलफील्ड (ना० ई० को०), जो कि को० इं० लि० के सीधे नियंत्रण में आने वाली एक यूनिट है, में घाटा हो रहा है। 31.3.97 की स्थिति के अनसार ई० को० लि० के सीधे नियंत्रण में आने वाली एक यूनिट है, में घाटा हो रहा है। भा० को० को० लि० और ना० ई० को० में हुए संचित घाटे का ब्यौरा निम्न है:—

(करोड़ रु० में)

	संचित घाटा
ई०को०लि०	1186.72
भा०को०को०लि०	1513.58
ना०ई०को०	61.16

इन कंपनियों/यूनिटों के 1997-98 के वार्षिक लेखों की लेखा परीक्षा अभी तक नहीं की गई है।

(ग) दिनांक 31.3.97 तक इन कंपनियों/यूनिटों में कुल पूंजीगत निवेश नीचे दिया गया है:—

(करोड़ रु० में)

	पूंजीगत निवेश
ई०को०लि०	3999.12
भा०को०को०लि०	3184.02
ना०ई०को०	131.59

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMUWALIA: Sir, ECL is heading for a staggering loss of Rs. 500 crores during the current financial year. Till the last financial year, 1997 this company has

†सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री बलवन्त सिंह रामूवालिया द्वारा पूछा गया।